

UPDATE ON THE HERCULANEUM REVITALIZATION PROJECT

June 9, 2003

This fact sheet was prepared to present key findings from community interviews and identify issues for moving forward on the project.

I. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Over 50 stakeholders from throughout the Herculaneum community were interviewed to identify key issues with regard to the revitalization of Herculaneum. Interviewees were selected to represent a balance of interests and viewpoints within the community. Discussions were also held with representatives of local, state, and federal agencies to fully understand the environmental response and public health programs that are currently underway in the community. The following points represent the key issues heard from the individuals interviewed. No effort was made at quantifying concerns or representing the information in a statistical fashion.

General Community Issues

- The most significant concern in the community is the enormous negative stigma that has resulted from recent publicity regarding lead contamination. Many of those interviewed believe that Herculaneum has been unfairly branded and Herculaneum residents want to act swiftly and strongly to overcome this stigma.
- Herculaneum residents exhibit a strong sense of loyalty to the city and most view it as a wonderful place to live and raise children citing safety, small-town feel, and great schools among its chief assets.
- The CAG meetings have been a strong focus of communication to the community, however attendance at the CAG has diminished over time. Strong divisions in the community caused many early CAG meetings to be contentious. Many individuals noted that more recent CAG meetings were less contentious and more effective.
- It is widely believed that Doe Run taxes provide significant support to local schools and would be difficult to replace if Doe Run were to shut down.

Lead Health Issues

- Most interviewees believe that current actions are adequate to address the lead problem, however a significant minority believe that not enough is being done to protect the community.
- Community understanding of health and safety issues is inconsistent. There appear to be numerous unanswered questions and a lack of substantive and accessible information with regard to both current and future risks to human health and the environment.
- There is concern about the safety of roads in the buyout zone particularly with regard to use by the cross-country team as a result of conflicting information on this subject over recent years.
- Concern was expressed about the arbitrary boundaries of the buyout zone and whether residents beyond the zone continued to be at risk.

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SUPERFUND RECORDS

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Buyout Zone Issues

- The great uncertainty with regard to the future of the buyout zone is causing real distress to the community. The presence of empty homes in the buyout zone is a concern for many residents.
- Some expressed doubts about the reasonableness of the daily requirements for cleanliness and the restrictions on children living in the zone.
- The mix of empty and occupied homes is a concern as well as the lack of a long-term vision for the zone.
- Not allowing children to live in the zone makes sense from a public health standpoint but is not conducive to a healthy community. Eliminating school age children from those 160 homes is a significant issue for the school district.
- Much of the remaining centers of community life (three churches and the AmVets Hall) are all located in the zone.
- The risk of recontamination and how this will impact the buyout zone over the long term is also a significant concern.
- The buyouts are having negative impacts on the community as similar affordable housing is not available in Herculanum and most buyout recipients are leaving the community.

Community Assets

- The River is viewed as a significantly underutilized resource.
- The loss of the downtown area was widely viewed as a significant problem.
- The excellent schools are a significant source of pride and identity in the community and a building block for the future.
- People would like to see more attention paid to aesthetic issues in the community such as trees and park space.
- There is a very rich history to Herculanum which people would like to see preserved and celebrated. The city celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2008 and this is a significant source of pride.
- Connection to Route 55 is a significant asset, but there is concern that the businesses and homes in that area are not strongly identified with Herculanum.

Desires for Future Development

- The lead issues have caused a significant rift in the community, and residents are interested in repairing those relationships and moving forward.
- There is a strong desire to get to the point where lead contamination is no longer an issue, but that must be based on good science and proper cleanup.
- There is little room for growth. Many individuals believe that Herculanum should act swiftly to annex the remaining adjacent land to the west of town.
- Residents would like to see the development of a community center to support recreation, youth, and senior programs.
- Residents would like to see development to bring back some sense of a downtown, including shopping and restaurants.
- There is significant concern that the majority of opportunity for future growth is outside of the Herculanum school district.

II. KEY ISSUES FOR REVITALIZATION

As a result of the interviews, a number of issues were identified which must be addressed in order for an effective revitalization effort to move forward.

- The future of the buyout zone is critical to the future of Herculanum and must be resolved, preferably through a cooperative effort among all parties. Issues of recontamination need to be better understood to allow for full dialogue. Doe Run, as the property owner, must be engaged directly in this conversation with regard to their plans and desires for the property.
- Other Doe Run properties in Herculanum including the former plant manager's property, the baseball park, and the golf course represent the bulk of undeveloped land in the older section of Herculanum. Doe Run's plans for these properties will be important to any revitalization planning.
- The remaining life-span for the lead smelter is limited due to diminishing lead supplies in local mines. While an exact time is difficult to determine, it is likely to be years, not decades. As such, the long-term reuse of the plant property will have a great deal of impact on what is appropriate for land use of the buy-out zone. As part of any revitalization effort, the likely cleanup requirements and timeframe for reuse of the Doe Run property will need to be better understood.
- The level and type of information that has been made available to residents is not sufficient to understand the full scope of the lead issue and how it will impact future decisions in Herculanum. More complete and accessible information needs to be created to provide the foundation for future use planning and revitalization efforts.
- The city's plans regarding future annexation of property will have an impact on the direction of growth for Herculanum and needs to be clearly understood.

III. KEY AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE ECONOMIC STUDY

As part of the revitalization project, a companion study is being conducted to identify key opportunities for revitalization. This study will include:

- Identification of the key factors for successful revitalization
- Recommendations for how the key factors could be addressed in Herculanum
- An overview of the growth potential for the city and the plans that are currently in place
- Identification of the local, state, and federal resources that are potentially available to assist Herculanum.

IV. POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR A VISIONING WORKSHOP

Based on the interviews, a number of issues were identified where residents can have significant impact in determining a future for Herculaneum.

- **Recreating a downtown.** What would this mean, how could it be achieved, where should it be located, and what types of establishments should be sought?
- **Planning for growth.** How does Herculaneum want to grow, where should growth occur, what types of growth should be pursued, how should the city proceed, what are the cautions that should be identified?
- **Future of the buyout zone.** How does the community envision this property being used, what are the impacts of different uses, how should this decision be made, what are the health and environmental limitations and how does this impact potential decisions?
- **Use of the Doe Run Plant property.** What are community interest for this property after Doe Run shuts down, what are the cleanup requirements, likely land condition, and timeframe and how do these factors impact future use?
- **Making the most of the Mississippi.** How can the community capitalize on its proximity to the River, what will it take to achieve this?
- **Enhancing the natural beauty of Herculaneum.** What can be done to enhance existing greenspace, create new green space, and enhance connection to natural features in the community?
- **Creating an involved community:** How to engage residents, enhance pride, and create a sustainable process of ensuring broad-based participation in planning for and implementing Herculaneum's future?
- **Identify requirements for a healthy and sustainable community.** Identify the core values of Herculaneum residents to be applied to all future decision making for the community.

V. NEXT STEPS FOR THE PROJECT

- Project staff would like to use the remaining resources to work cooperatively with a broad-based community group to develop revitalization information and plan a revitalization workshop.
- The goal is to conduct the workshop as soon as possible, ensuring that all needed information is developed and that all interested stakeholders can attend.

VI. FOR MORE INFORMATION

All Herculaneum residents are welcome and encouraged to participate in the project.

Doug Sarno of The Perspectives Group is providing support for the overall revitalization project. Loretta Hiner is conducting the economic study. Bob Field and Kerry Herndon are managing the project for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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